



Living in Faith

Discipleship Series

An overview
of the
Apostles'
Creed



What Christians Believe

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An overview of the Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.



Multi-Language Publications
Bringing the Word to the World

What Christians Believe

Living in Faith Discipleship Series

LIVING IN FAITH Discipleship Series 2018

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What Christians Believe

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Table of Contents

Getting Started.....	2
Chapter 1: Why have a Creed?.....	3
Chapter 2: What is the Trinity?.....	15
Chapter 3: Who is God the Father?.....	28
Chapter 4: Who is God the Son?.....	41
Chapter 5: Who is God the Holy Spirit?.....	55

APPENDIX

Apostles' Creed – Luther's Explanation.....	68
Nicene Creed.....	71

Getting Started

This book is about God the Apostles' Creed as a statement of faith. Where did it come from and how does it fit in your life? We will divide the section or articles of the creed to understand better what it tells us about God and our relationship with him. We will do this by studying his Word, the Bible.

READ THE TEXT

Each lesson is broken up into smaller sections with a review question after each section. Feel free to stop at any of the passages to make sure you understand them or to dig more deeply into what they are saying. Circle, underline, or highlight key words.

GRAPPLE WITH THE QUESTIONS

In this book there are also questions to start, review and end the lesson. If you are studying this on your own, think through the questions for yourself. If you are studying in a group, use the questions for deeper discussion. Designate someone as a facilitator. Allow each individual a level of comfort to ask questions and freedom to discover and grow.

PREPARE TO SUMMARIZE AND SHARE AT THE END

The lessons are not just about learning information but applying it to your life and sharing it with others. As you go through lessons prepare to summarize it at the end to be able to retell it. It might be helpful to underline or circle key phrases or passages.

NOTICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Each page also includes additional references on the sidebar for those who want to dig deeper (You will need a Bible or a Bible app to read those sections). They are available to use in group or in personal study.



= Location of Bible Story



= Search options – related passages

APPLY IT TO YOUR LIFE & MAP OUT YOUR NEXT STEPS



After connecting the timeless truths to your life, make sure you map out Next Steps before ending the lesson.



Chapter One

WHY HAVE A CREED?



Many countries and cultures have unique stories that shape their identity. Some have songs or chants that bring them together. Despite other differences, they value something that unites them and declares to others, “this is what we are all about.”

1. What story, song, or chant can you think of that unites an ethnic group, a country, or a religious group?

The Apostles’ Creed is the most well-known expression of what Christianity is. Over many centuries Christians have used it to provide a united voice in what the Scriptures say about God and how he relates to us. It is often recited together during Christian worship services and

memorized by those new to the faith. In this book, you will learn about the Apostles' Creed. You will find out what its words mean. In this chapter, we will introduce you to the importance of the Apostles' Creed and where it came from.

A CREED EXPRESSES WHAT I BELIEVE

It is said that if you don't stand for anything, you fall for everything. There are so many opinions and perspectives of life, it often gets confusing. The internet hasn't made that easier. Who knows what to believe any more! But among all the topics, it is most important to understand what you believe about God. It affects your attitudes and behaviors. It shapes your decisions and relationships. It influences how you handle success or deal with struggles. But more importantly it affects your eternity. So, what do you believe? What do Christians believe?

A creed is a description of what you believe. The word "creed" comes from a Latin word "credo"

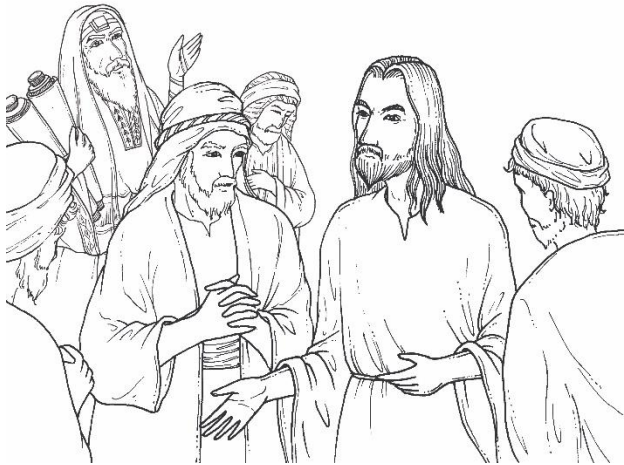
A creed is a description of what you believe

which simply means, "I believe." A creed reflects the underlying basis of your values

and beliefs. It defines your identity. It serves as a witness to what is in your heart and the blueprint on which you build your life. Every person, every culture, and every country lives by some sort of creed. Sometimes the creed is written down, like a country's constitution. Other times it is unspoken and not formed into words.

The best known Christian creed is the Apostles' Creed. Who were the Apostles? In the days of Jesus, an apostle meant someone who was "sent out." An

apostle of a king, for example, would be sent out to tell people the messages of the king. We might liken them to ambassadors today who represent their country to others. The apostles of Jesus were ones specially chosen by him and personally trained by him. To be an apostle they first needed to be a disciple. The term “disciple” described a loyal follower of a great teacher or philosopher.



Disciples sought to be trained by that expert's teachings and lifestyle. Not only were their lives modeled after his, but they were to accurately pass on his teachings to others. Jesus' disciples were also to be eyewitnesses of his death and resurrection so they could be “sent out” to tell others what they had seen and heard (1 John 1:1-3).

When Jesus returned to heaven, he told his disciples they would now serve as his apostles to carry his message to the whole world. It is often called “The Great Commission.” Jesus would send the Holy Spirit to ensure they could accurately and boldly proclaim the message about him. Some of them



The Twelve Apostles

Matthew 10:1-8

Mark 3:13-19

Luke 6:13-16

Acts 1:9-13

And later... Paul

1 Corinthians 15:5-11

wrote down their witness in the part of the Bible we call the New Testament. It is Jesus words of truth passed down from generation to generation.

It is called the Apostles' Creed because it is a statement of the beliefs they taught in the Bible.

But the Twelve Apostles did not write the Apostles' Creed as we know it. It is called the Apostles' Creed

because it is a statement that summarizes the core beliefs taught by the apostles. As apostle Paul told his student Timothy,

"What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus"
(2 Timothy 1:13).

After the apostles were no longer around to serve as the eyewitnesses of the life and teachings of Jesus, simple statements began to emerge to clarify the key truths of the gospel message the Apostles proclaimed. Soon the Apostles' Creed took on the form we use today. It became a universal expression of the central teaching of the Christian faith to make sure that the Christian church is...

"built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone... built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

2. Discuss the significance the title "Apostles' Creed."



The Great Commission

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 1:8

Acts 26:16-18

CREEDS TO SUMMARIZE THE SCRIPTURES

Once in a while, people question the value of creeds. They cry out, "Deeds, not creeds." Often their comment is a criticism of those who do not seem to live according to their faith - even though they claim

Faith needs to be solidly grounded on Scripture

to have a correct statement of faith. And yes, Apostle James says, "*Faith by itself, if it is not*

accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17). But faith must come first and it will produce the proper fruit for "*without faith, it is impossible to please God*" (Hebrews 11:6). And contrary to popular opinion, it is not our deeds or experience that save, but the faith that clings to Jesus and who he really is. Jesus said,

"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

Apostle Paul states,

"For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law" (Romans 3: 28).

If the Bible is not the anchor of faith, we end up just believing the popular opinions of the day and looking more at a person's lifestyle than on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. People begin to fashion their concept of God more in line with their own viewpoint or of the culture around them.



Faith alone in Christ saves (but faith is never alone)

Romans 4:1-8, 18-25

Galatians 3:6-14

Ephesians 2:8-10

James 2:17-18



It is with your mouth that you profess your faith

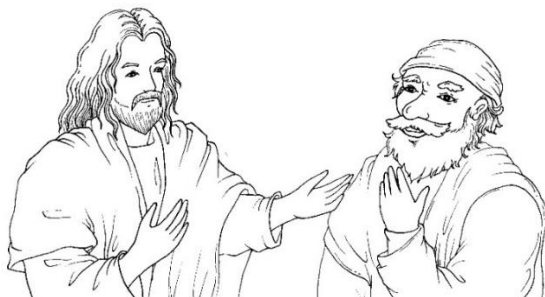
Matthew 10:32-33

Romans 10:9-11

**The words we say identify
who we are and what we
really believe**

The words we say
in a creed can help
express what the
Bible says. When
Jesus asked Apostle

Peter, *"Who do you say I am?"* Peter responded, *"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God"* (Matthew 16:15-16). That was essentially a creed. Others responded with similar words elsewhere in the Gospels (John 6:68, 11:27).



The specific teachings we believe are often referred to as *"the faith."* Paul refers to *"the deep truths of the faith"* (1 Timothy 3:9). And the writer to the Hebrews encourages, *"Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess"* (Hebrews 4:14). To the Romans, Paul wrote, that there was a standard example of what they were to follow and pass on to others:

"Thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance" (Romans 6:17).

Apostle Paul became more specific:



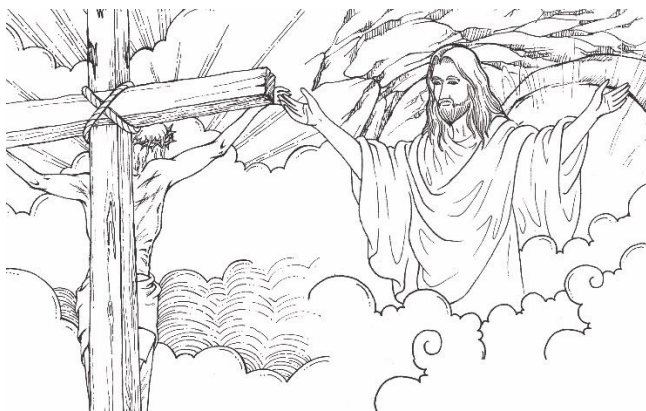
**"The Faith" –
teachings on
which Christian
faith rests**

Ephesians 4:13

1 Timothy 4:1, 6

“By this gospel you are saved...For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:2-4).

With that statement, Paul clarified the main biblical story that defines the faith of Christianity. It is the story of Jesus around which the Apostles’ Creed is formed and on which our faith depends.



To know what you believe about Jesus informs your heart and guides your life choices, your relationships,

**To know what you believe
informs your heart and
guides your life choices**

your worship. It determines what you will live for and what you will die for. This faith was so

important to the Apostles and what they lived for. Almost all of them were put to death as martyrs for standing strong and confident in their confession.

3. Discuss the importance of Creeds to believers.

THE HISTORIC USES OF THE CREEDS

We should seek to ensure we are understanding Scripture and aligning our faith to it. Many creeds and confessions have been written to state what a group believes from Scripture. Three historic creeds are considered “ecumenical” creeds or creeds accepted by Christians around the world. They are the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. These creeds were not intended to replace Scripture, but to clarify and confirm what Scripture said.

The Apostles’ Creed served the early Christian Church in several ways. Early in the development of the Christian Church, the Apostles’ Creed was used for those who were going to be baptized. It became part of confessing the faith into which they

**When we say the
Apostles’ Creed, we are
also expressing our
worship of God**

were being baptized. Today, reciting the creed shows we are bound together by our beliefs and part of the same spiritual family. And when we say the Apostles’ Creed we are also expressing our worship of God. That is why the creed developed an important place in worship services.

The creed also becomes a tool to give a clear witness to our faith. Peter tells us we should,

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).



Types of “creeds” in Scripture

Deuteronomy 6:4

Matthew 16:16

1 Corinthians 8:6

1 Corinthians 15:1-5

Philippians 2:6-11

Colossians 1:12-20

The Apostles' Creed is short and easy to memorize or rephrase as an answer to the question, "What do you believe about God?"



Creeds also have served as a “Rule of Faith” or “Rule of Truth” – a standard to identify between true and false teachings. The true Christian Church has always been a “confessional church” in the stand for truth.

The Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed unite us to the Christian Church of all times and cultures.

apostles set out a formal confession to address errors that undermined the beautiful truths of the gospel (Acts 15:1-11, 23-31). Creeds were formed to articulate the very truths of scripture that were under attack at that time. They became a basis for either Christian fellowship or to set themselves apart from

The Christian Church has always been a “confessional church”

Not many years after Jesus ascended to heaven, controversies hit the early Christian Church. At one of those times the

false teachings. One such time was an ecumenical council in Nicea in A.D. 325 that crafted the Nicene Creed. It is



Those who abandon “the Faith”

1 Timothy 4:1-3

1 Timothy 6:3-5

another universal standard from which unity of Christian faith is expressed and error tested. Those creeds anchor our faith in Scripture...

"so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God...no longer ...blown here and there by every wind of teaching" (Ephesians 4:12-14).



So we are not alone in what we believe. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed become a clear witness to the faith entrusted to us. They unite us the Christian Church of all times across many cultures.

4. Summarize how the Apostles' Creed served the Christian Church over the years?



CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. The early Christians used the Apostles' Creed in a way to express their faith that was based on the Bible. How does it inspire believers today?
2. Some reject any writings from other people, including the Creeds, because they say you should only believe the Bible. How do you respond to them?
3. Some believers say that they don't know how to share the Gospel. Create an outline of how you could share the gospel by following the content of the Apostles' Creed.
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



DEVELOP A SUMMARY OF THE LESSON – Write down and discuss a brief explanation of this lesson. Make it clear and simple enough to share with others. If possible, illustrate it with a drawing or diagram.



YOUR NEXT STEPS

Study it!

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

Memorize it!

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

Apply it!

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

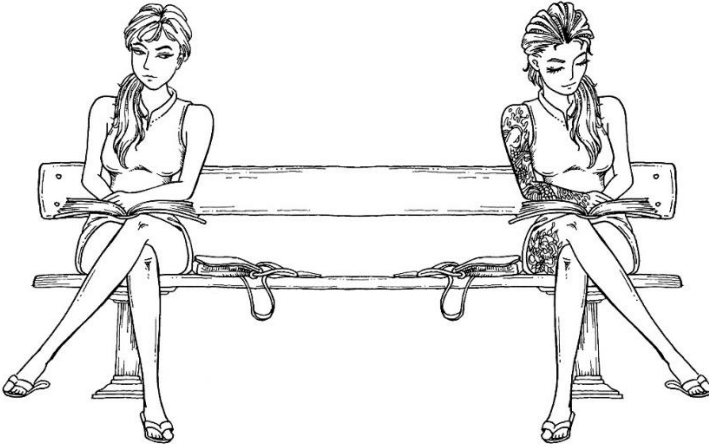
Share it!

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

Go on to the next lesson to learn how the Apostles' creed distinguishes Christianity from the many other concepts of gods in the world.

Chapter Two

WHAT IS THE TRINITY?



Because we all come from different family backgrounds, cultures, education and life experiences, we quickly form opinions and judgments about others. Perhaps they look and act different from us. We jump to conclusions on what someone is like without even knowing anything about the circumstances or motives behind what we saw or heard. That often causes misunderstanding and bad relationships.

1. Discuss how you would go about deciding what a person is really like?

It is even more difficult for people to know what God is really like. He is not just from a different culture, he is not even of this world. He is totally unique from humanity. He exists in “unapproachable light.” Isaiah calls him a “hidden” God that cannot be discovered by

observation or research. He is the only one who can tell us what he is really like. In his Word, the Bible, he tells us about himself so we can have a close relationship with him and live confidently in him. In this chapter, you will be able to see how the three main parts of the Apostles' Creed distinguishes him as unique from what others consider gods.

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

In the Apostles' creed we confess that there a God,

"I believe in God...almighty."

Some people in the world say there is no God. They may say that if there was a god, we wouldn't have all the pain and tragedy in this world. They fail to see the whole picture. Psalm 14:1 says,

"The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

In every culture you can find at least a vague concept of a god that influences them. Many use the term

In every culture you can find at least a vague concept of God

"god" to refer to what is unknowable in the universe. They presume some greater power lies

behind the origin and happenings in our world. They sense some divine standard of right and wrong that judges us. Their inner voice of conscience convicts or excuses them on that basis.

Throughout history, people have tried to understand God by looking at nature. They have tried interpreting his involvement in the unexplainable events of the world. Cultures such as ancient Egyptians, Romans, and Greeks believed there were many gods that influenced or fought over the earth. They believed that one god controlled the sea, one

Atheism says, "there is no god."

Polytheism says, "there are many gods"

Pantheism says, "everything is god."

Monotheism says, "there is only one God."



Foolishness of idols

Isaiah 44:9-20
Jeremiah 10:1-18

controlled the thunder, one controlled love, and so on. Similar beliefs are still a part of different cultures around our world today.



Others believe nature is god and nature is to be respected and worshipped as god or it will turn against us. For them, the Creator and creation is one and the same. In all of these religions people are seeking ways to secure the favor and blessings from something they cannot see or to protect themselves from evil that they fear is lurking out there.

Paul explains why are there so many different ideas about God:

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal



**Paul tells Athens
about their
“unknown God”**

Acts 17:16-34

human being and birds and animals and reptiles.
(Romans 1:20-23).

But there is a way to know the true God. He reveals who he is in the Bible. It is his witness to the world. God says of himself,

"Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed – I, and not some foreign god among you (Isaiah 43:10-12).

Then later explains,

"I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6).

To Moses he said,

"I Am who I Am" (Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15).



To Israel, God revealed himself as "Jahweh," a name that distinguished the true God from anything else people called gods. The unifying creed of believers of the Old Testament was,



God's glory shown in his actions

The Creation
Genesis 1-2

The Flood
Genesis 6-9

The Exodus
Exodus 13-14

Elijah & Baal
1 Kings 18:16-46



God is Sovereign – He can do what he pleases

Psalms 33:4-11

Daniel 4:35

Isaiah 40:21-26;
43:13; 44:9-12

Romans 11:33-35

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, **the LORD** (JAHWEH) is one"* (Deuteronomy 6:4).

He is sovereign – above everything and in control of the whole universe

God is sovereign – above everything and in control of the whole universe, including the details

of your life. He is without equal. No one can stop him from doing as he pleases, and what he pleases and does is always just and holy. Paul describes God as,

"God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen" (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

To the city of Corinth Apostle Paul wrote,

*"**There is no God but one.**" For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), **yet for us there is but one God, the Father**, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, **Jesus Christ**, through whom all things came and through whom we live"* (1 Corinthians 8:4-6). It is important to realize that if this God is "for us" nothing can be "against us" (Romans 8:31).

2. Summarize the main messages of this section.



**Moses trembles
in the presence
of God**

Exodus 3:1-15



**Isaiah trembles
in the presence
of God**

Isaiah 6:1-8

GOD IS THE THREE-IN-ONE

God wants us to have faith in him. The Bible says

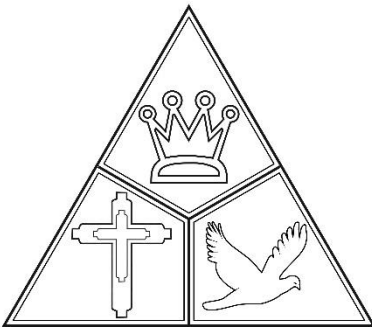
*"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him **must believe that he exists** and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him"*
(Hebrews 11:5).

But at times people have been confused by what the Bible says about God. In some parts of the Bible, it sounds like there are three Gods or that God showed up in three different ways. The Bible speaks of God

**Triune (or Trinity) means –
God is one God with three
separate persons**

the Father who
created all things.
The Bible also
speaks of God the
Son who came to

earth and became a man named Jesus in order to save us. The Bible also speaks of God the Holy Spirit who works spiritual life in us. We do not say that there are three Gods because the Bible tells us there is only one God. Over time Christians have explained it with the word "triune" or "Trinity." "Tri" means three and "une" means one.



**He is God
Almighty who
can do the
impossible**

Genesis 17:1-8



**Three persons -
one God**

Matthew 28:19

John 15:26

2 Corinthians
13:14

When we say that God is triune, we mean that God is one God but also three separate and distinct persons. The Father is not the Son nor are either of them the Holy Spirit. Each can be identified individually in Scriptures. The teaching of the “Trinity” differentiates the God of the Bible from all other concepts of god and all other religious beliefs. This is the distinctive mark of Christianity.

How can we make any sense of this? Even in our world there is a lot we may not understand but we

**We don't get to decide
who God is.
He is who he is.**

still accept. There is a lot in nature we can't fully grasp, but we accept it as it is and enjoy its benefits.

And we even don't fully understand how our own will and emotions and intellect shape what we do. And how many modern inventions are far too complicated for many to understand how they work – perhaps like your mobile phone or television. There is no parallel to the Triune God in what we observe in life. Even if we can't fully understand him, God is who he is. God is holy – set far above and beyond reason and our human experience. Our minds are too small to grasp it all, so we must simply take God at his Word and enjoy for who he is. The Apostle Paul said, *“we live by faith, and not by sight”* (2 Corinthians 5:7). It becomes most clear when we get to know stories of the Bible and the person and teachings of Jesus.

3. Describe what it means that God is a triune God. What makes that hard to explain?



**Christianity – a
revealed
knowledge of
God made
personal in Jesus**

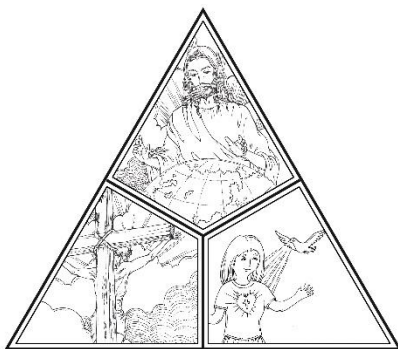
Hebrews 1:1-2

John 1:1-2, 14-18

EQUAL BUT DISTINCT PART OF SALVATION

The Bible tells us much about the Trinity. For one thing, it tells us that all three persons are equal. They are all God. None is greater or more divine than any other person in the Trinity. Yet all carry out different, unique roles and relationships with each other. Each had a role in our salvation. Jesus tells us we are to baptize in the name of God: *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit* (Matthew 28:19). The Athanasian Creed, written around 1,500 years ago, emphasized the mysteries about the Trinity.

“We worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God, without mixing the persons or dividing the divine being. For each person – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – is distinct, but the deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory and coeternal in majesty...none comes before or after; none is greater or inferior....all three persons are to be worshipped as one God and one God worshipped as three persons...Whoever wishes to be saved must have this conviction of the Trinity...Whoever does not faithfully and firmly believe this cannot be saved.”



The character of God

Psalm 103



Attributes of God

Psalm 33:4-5

Psalm 90:2

Matthew 19:26

John 4:24

1 John 4:8

Each person of the Triune God is part of the unfolding story of our salvation and the hope we have. To deny or ignore any one of the Trinity is to

Each person of the Trinity has a unique place and relationship to our daily lives

misunderstand all of them and their vital role in our lives. Each person of the Trinity also has a unique place and relationship to our daily lives.

Each person gives us a better grasp of how God loves us. We connect the Father with creating all things and with preserving, or taking care of, everything in the world. We connect the Son with saving us because he alone died on the cross for our sins. We connect the Holy Spirit with giving us life by drawing us to believe in God and what he has done for us. This does not mean the other two persons had nothing to do with these activities. But the one

Our faith is not based on a subjective feeling or intellect, but on God's revealed story

person is more associated with these activities than the other two.

The three sections of the Apostles' Creed

help us express the glory and greatness of a God who is actually "three-in-one." God's actions bring us into an eternal saving relationship with him. So our faith is not based on a subjective emotions, scientific observation, or collective intellect, but on God's revealed story. The Christian faith doesn't depend on how well it works for you, how it makes life more meaningful, or how it gives you direction and inspiration – even though it will do all that. It is a belief based on historical facts brought to light in



The God who loves and saves us

Romans 8:31-39

1 John 4:7-12



Scripture. They are timeless truths acknowledged by millions throughout time. And knowing His story is the starting point to understanding the mysteries of the universe. Learning about God and his work will lead us to a sense of awe and wonder.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

God reveals who he is so we can love him and enjoy the peace and power that comes through that. In depending on him we learn to handle the challenges of life. And in loving him, we learn what it is to love our neighbor.

As you continue to learn about God, it will help you also recognize his greatness in your world. Let it draw you into the amazement of who he is and what he has made. Let it build confidence in how he operates with his love in your life. May it lead you to the same conclusion as the Apostle Paul.

Learning about God and his work will lead us to a sense of awe and wonder

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?” For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Romans 11:33-36).



The “fear” (or awe) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom

Deuteronomy 10:12
1 Chronicles 16:23-28

Psalms 111:10

Psalms 145:17-20

Isaiah 33:5-6



Love Lord your God

Deuteronomy 6:4-8

Matthew 22:36-38

1 John 4:16-19

4. Briefly describe the main works of each person of the Trinity in your own words.



CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. Describe the confusing and conflicting concepts of God in our world today and how that affects the life of their followers.
2. How does it help you in your daily life to know that our God is sovereign and ultimately in charge of what happens in this world?
3. Which attributes of God impressed you the most? What are their meanings to you?

4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



DEVELOP A SUMMARY OF THE LESSON – Write down and discuss a brief explanation of this lesson. Make it clear and simple enough to share with others. If possible, illustrate it with a drawing or diagram.



YOUR NEXT STEPS

Study it!

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

Memorize it!

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

Apply it!

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

Share it!

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

Go on to the next chapter to learn more about God the Father and how his creative and sustaining activity continues on in your world.

Chapter Three

GOD THE FATHER

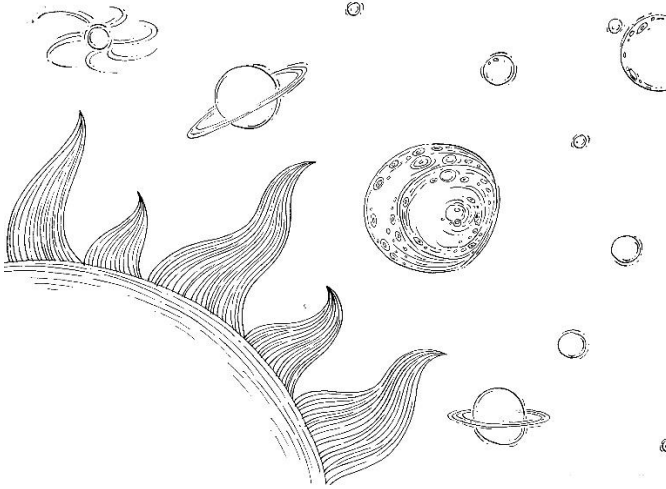
The Apostles' Creed – Part 1

THE FIRST ARTICLE (Creation)

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

Chapter Three

GOD THE FATHER



The variety and complexity of the world has occupied the interest and the awe of people since the beginning of time. No matter where people live in this world, they are surrounded by many wonders of the universe. They write stories about it. They visit it. They study it. Some try to make sense of it. Others merely enjoy it.

1. What are some of the wonders of our world that most captivate your awe and appreciation?

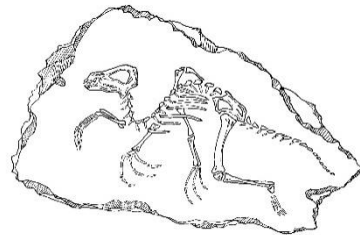
In this chapter we will discuss the first part of the Apostles' Creed, which is called the First Article. Here Christians confess what they believe about the Father

One of the basic questions that lies behind every culture, religion, or search for meaning is, "Where did this world come from? What keeps it going?" The Apostles' Creed begins by answering that question from the biblical point of view.

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS

People know there is so much more to our existence than what we can see. The awe of creation and our inability to explain its complexities leads people around the world to believe there is a higher power, an intelligent designer and builder of the universe. But religions and sciences come up with many different answers to the questions. The conclusions often depend on their starting point. Some build on the assumption that the universe came into existence by chance events. They believe it evolved in complexity over millions of years through adaptations that were needed for survival. In that theory of beginnings, humans are merely highly developed animals that began as lower life forms. Those views are built on a faith in many assumptions that can't be scientifically proven. Even fossils don't tell us the complete story of the beginning or even the fate of creatures that have become extinct today. Many of the events happened long before any historic evidence is recorded about them.



There is another starting point. God posed this question to a man named Job, "*Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?*" (Job 38:4). There were no

human witnesses of the beginning of the world. There was only God. His Word, the Bible, is his testimony about what happened. Believing the Bible

Believing what the Bible says is the starting point for reason and investigation

as the starting point gives foundation and direction for reasons and conclusions of what is being discovered. Through Isaiah, God says,

“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing” (Isaiah 40:25-26).



Where were you when I created all this?

Job 38-39

All the discoveries in science take on a new dimension when your starting point is faith and confidence in the Word of God. It provides *“assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for”* (Hebrews 11:1-2). We discover so much more purpose and honor and value for our lives when we understand God’s creating activity.

How did God make everything? The writer of Hebrews states,

“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible” (Hebrews 11:3).



The account of creation

Genesis 1-2

The writer to the Hebrews says,

“Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything” (Hebrews 3:4).

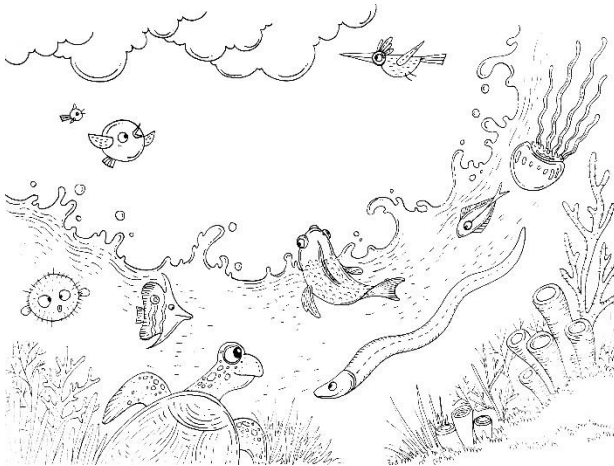
A builder needs lumber and steel and glass and tools that are available in order to create a house. An artist

**God created everything
by just saying the word**

has to start with brushes, paint, and a piece of canvas that already exists in order to create a

painting. But in the beginning, God was alone. There was nothing else. He the artist and builder created everything by just saying the word. The psalmist explains,

*“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
their starry host by the breath of his mouth. For he
spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood
firm” (Psalm 33:6,9).*



Like the author of a book who imagines his story and writes it down in words, God knew the world he wanted and with words made it appear. You can read the details of the creation of the world in the first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.... And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:1,3).

The account tells us how God made each part of the entire universe and each detail of our world in an orderly progression. It concludes,

"In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day" (Exodus 20:11).

Our seven-day week recalls the week of creation.

2. Explain how the Bible describes creation.

OUR PROVIDER AND PROTECTOR

In the Apostles' Creed we also say, "I believe in God, the Father almighty." Not only is God all-powerful, but he is our loving Father. We are his dear children.

They represented their Maker in carrying out God's loving rule and care over the earth

He created humanity for a special relationship with him. He formed Adam, the first man, out of the dust of the ground.

He breathed life into him. Later, he took one of Adam's ribs and formed a woman. She became Eve his wife. God created them in his own image. He gave them characteristics that enabled them to enjoy a unique interaction and companionship with God. He set them up his royal ambassadors to the world.



**Created to
bring glory to
him**

Colossians 1:16



**God cares for
his world**

Matthew 10:29-31

They represented their Maker in carrying out God's loving rule and care over the earth.



God didn't just create the world and sit idly by. He takes care of his world (after all, it is his world, not ours). He continues to preserve this world in both natural and supernatural ways. He keeps the stars and planets in their orbits. He makes the rain to fall and the sun to shine so plants can grow and promises, *"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease"* (Genesis 8:22). He directs the course of history and often does it through people.

And you? Your existence in this world is not random or an accident. God fashioned you particularly to be his special handiwork for a unique purpose. The psalmist says,

"You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your



**Natural means
set in motion
to provide for
us**

Leviticus 26:4

Psalm 104

Psalm 67:6

Psalm 145:13-19

Psalm 147:4-11

Job 38-39

book before one of them came to be.” (Psalm 139:13-14, 16).

He knows your thoughts and even the number of hairs on your head. God gives you your body and soul, your mind and your abilities. He arranges that you have clothes and food and home and family. He provides your skills and circumstances and your opportunities to serve. More than we realize, he richly and daily provides for you. Jesus tells us not to worry because our heavenly Father knows what we need and will supply it at the proper time – when he knows it is best for us.

God created angels as spiritual beings to keep you from harm and danger. He also supplies people to help you – mothers & fathers, farmers, physicians, and all useful trades and relationships. This too is part of his care.



**God provides for you
through the callings of
others and provides for
others through you.**

But he also equips you and gives you unique callings. It is his way of caring for others. The more you appreciate how God



No need to worry

Matthew 6:25-34

Matthew 10:28-31

1 Peter 5:7

Philippians 4:6-9



Miraculous Protection and Preservation

Exodus 14:10-22

Exodus 16:1-18

1 Kings 17:1-16

John 6:3-14

works through each of us, the more you realize there is no insignificant calling or role he can give you. There is no task or job beneath you, only people who are in front of you that your task serves.

God will never grow tired or weary of caring for you. When we trust him, he will give us strength to “*soar on wings like eagles*” (Isaiah 40:28-31).

3. Describe some of the ways God takes care of you and preserves your life.

THE CORRUPTION OF HIS CREATION

Look at creation today. The pollution, the pain, the devastation of war, the natural catastrophes, the sickness, the broken relationships. This is not how God designed it to be. What happened? God had given Adam and Eve the whole world, and it was

**This is not how God
designed it to be**

perfect. So were they. They had a perfect relationship with God, with each other, and with the world God

created. If they kept on depending on God in absolute faith and trust, they would continue to enjoy a perfect world. Their opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to him came by not eating the fruit of one specific tree. But the devil lured them into thinking God was keeping something good from them. He made it look so inviting. And so they ate the fruit in disobedience to God. Their rebellion



**The
corruption of
our hearts**

Genesis 8:21

Jeremiah 17:9

Matthew 15:19

Romans 5:12

tumbled the perfect world into the chaos of sin. This caused the ruin of God's perfect creation. The perfect relationship with God, with each other, and with the created world fell apart. Decay and death entered in. Because of this people fail miserably to be what God intended, and the world is affected by it. Human wickedness shows itself in the atrocities of history as well as the selfish emotions of our own hearts.



Lost and condemned creatures

Galatians 3:10

Romans 3:9-20

Ephesians 2:1-3

And as much as we try, we can't fix the brokenness of the world because we are part of the problem. It is inside of us. We inherited the spiritual corruption of sin from our first ancestors. Instead of living for God's glory and serving others, life turns inward to focusing on ourselves – on what we want, what we think. We end up abusing God's creation and manipulating people for our own desires rather than representing God to them. It has driven us away from God's holy presence and condemned us to a separation from him in the agonies of hell.

That ought to humble and terrify us. But we can be thankful for his fatherly heart toward us. It is only *"because of his mercy we are not consumed"* (Lam 3:22-

23). God loves the world so passionately that he hates everything that brings him into disrepute and ruins our relationship with him. So out of his love, he interrupted the destructive direction of human history by sending in Jesus, his only Son. Jesus bore the shame of our sin and took it to the cross. There he became the sacrifice to restore us to God, so we could again enjoy his favor. This is the greatest proof that God cares for us and provides what we need.

All this God does this not because we have earned or deserved it and not because we are entitled to it. He does it because he is our good and merciful Father in

**Live out his love to those
around you**

heaven. One day he will bring us to a new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. This is all possible only because of Jesus. We will study that in the next chapter. Because of Jesus, we can call God “Father” without fear. He reinstated us to the honor of being God’s children. How do we respond? Love him with all your heart and soul and mind and strength and live out his love to those around you.

4. Briefly explain the problem that made God’s created world so broken. How did God solve this problem?



**New
relationship
with the Father**

Matthew 6:25-34;

7:7-11; 18:10-14

Galatians 4:4-7

1 John 3:1-3



**Our response to
God’s care for us**

Deuteronomy

10:12-21

1 Corinthians 10:31

Matthew 22:34-40



CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. Describe popular views of the origin of our world and what lies behind the natural catastrophes that happen. How does the Bible provide a uniquely different starting point to explain things?
2. Some people think that God left the world alone after He created it, and people are left alone to survive. How do you respond to them based on this chapter?
3. Think of how the almighty God, has been providing for you in your life.
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



DEVELOP A SUMMARY OF THE LESSON – Write down and discuss a brief explanation of this lesson. Make it clear and simple enough to share with others. If possible, illustrate it with a drawing or diagram.



YOUR NEXT STEPS

Study it!

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

Memorize it!

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

Apply it!

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

Share it!

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

Go on to Chapter Four to understand how a just and holy God could ever accept us as his dear children

Chapter Four

GOD THE SON

The Apostles' Creed – Part 2

THE SECOND ARTICLE (Redemption)

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of
God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Chapter Four

GOD THE SON



Do you sometimes feel forgotten, unnoticed? Sometimes it helps when friends or relatives care enough to come and visit. When they gladly come a long distance, it shows how much you mean to them. What about when someone famous decides to come and personally visit you? How exciting is that! How important and significant do you feel now?

1. Who would you love to come visit you personally to talk with you face to face?

Often God seems so far away. Why would he want to be seen with us? Why should he care about us? Many people feel he is disconnected and unconcerned about us. Here is how God showed his love for us: God the Son, came to our world to be with us. He did even more than that. He came to die for us. The Second Article explains who the Son of God is. Knowing what he has done changes the way you think about God, your life, your priorities, and the world around you.

TWO NATURES OF JESUS

The Second Article of the Apostles' Creed begins:

"I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord."

By confessing these words, we say we believe that the son of a Jewish carpenter who lived about 2,000 years ago is not only a man but also God the Son. His name was Jesus. As the Son of God, he always existed from eternity. But God also chose to come into our world and be physically present with us. He would be the person of Jesus. An awesome and mind-boggling mystery! How did that happen?

The Apostles' Creed continues to tell the story:

"... (Jesus) was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary..."

At a specific time in history Jesus was born as a baby in the manger of Bethlehem (Galatians 4:4-5). Mary

God chose to come into our world and physically be present with us. He would be the person Jesus

was a young virgin. She had no intimate sexual activity with any man. So you can imagine how

surprised she was when an angel came to her to tell her she was going to be pregnant and give birth to the Son of God. The child would be the long-anticipated Messiah. The angel told her the baby's conception in the womb of Mary was a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. We call it the time God became "incarnate" (that is "in flesh") and came to live with us. That is why Jesus is also called



Jesus' relationship with God the Father

John 5:16-27;
14:6-14; 17:1-11
Matthew 26:36-42



Jesus is God

John 8:53-59
Matthew 16:13-17
Colossians 1:13-20; 2:9-10



Prophecies of Jesus' birth

Isaiah 7:14
Isaiah 9:6-7
Isaiah 60:1-9
Micah 5:2-5

“Immanuel” which means *“God with us”* (Matthew 1:22-23). What an amazing miracle! Today Christians celebrate the birthday of Jesus every Christmas.



To explain the uniqueness of Jesus as the very expression of God, Apostle John describes him as *“the Word.”* He writes,

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-3, 14).



The Account of Jesus’ birth

Galatians 4:4-5

Luke 1-2

Matthew 1-2



The Humanity of Jesus

Luke 2:40

Matthew 4:2

Mark 4:38

John 11:35

Mark 15:37

Luke 24:39

So Jesus has two distinct natures combined into one person. He is God from eternity who at that point in history added to himself the nature of man when he

**So Jesus has two
distinct natures
combined into one
person – God and man**

was born to Mary. As the Athanasian Creed, written about 1,500 years ago, says he was “taking the humanity into God...so God and

man are one Christ.” Wow! Try to squeeze that into your head!

During the time that Jesus lived on earth, he performed miracles that only God could do. Often he taught and revealed what only God could know. He showed how much God cares by eating with “sinners” and helping the marginalized people. He also often set aside his divine power and majesty so that he could live as one of us. He can identify with our pain and endured our suffering.

2. Explain the two natures (God and human) of Jesus in your own word.

THE MAIN WORK OF JESUS

Although Jesus experienced temptations like we do, he reacted without sin. He was perfect in all he did. The Son of God didn’t come to earth just to be an example of how we should live or just to improve our lives on earth. Before Jesus was born, the angel told Mary and her future husband Joseph they were to call their baby “Jesus” (which means “God saves”)



Jesus – true God and true Man

John 1:1-18

Romans 1:1-4;
9:4-5

Galatians 4:4

Philippians 2:5-8



Divine Miracles of Jesus

John 2:1-11

Matthew 8:23-27

Matthew 9:1-8

Mark 5:1-20

John 11:38-44

"for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The only way we could be rescued from eternal punishment and unending shame is if God became part of his own creation. That way he could take on the battle against Satan that we could never win. And the only way a holy God could accept us was to be the one who lived a holy life in our place.

The Apostles' Creed continues to explain the story:

".... (Jesus) suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried."



But Jesus was perfect, why did he suffer and die? Part of it was because Jesus also experienced the

Jesus also experienced the injustice of the world

injustice of the world – especially from the Jewish leaders. They were enraged that he would say he was the

“Son of God” even though the miracles he did gave plenty of evidence he was. Some have said that whenever Jesus claimed he was the Son of God, he was either a liar, a lunatic, or our Lord. It was his claim that he was God that led him to be arrested and



Jesus – our supreme...

Prophet

Isaiah 61:1

Matthew 17:5

High Priest

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Hebrews 7:26-27

Eternal King

Isaiah 9:6-7

Ephesians 1:18-22

Philippians 2:9-11



Prophecy of Jesus' Death

Psalm 22

Isaiah 53



Account of Jesus' Death

Mark 15

tortured by the Jewish leaders. They sent him to his death for that. He hung there in the shame and public disgrace of crucifixion.

But behind all of the drama on the surface was a bigger plan of God. Jesus' death on the cross shows us how much God hates sin and its shame. It also shows the extent of his love to save us. God had his own Son endure our shame and punishment so we would not have to. Apostle Peter says,

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

His lifeblood was the ransom paid to free us from being held hostage to sin, death and the devil's power

Jesus redeemed us – that is he gave his perfect life in exchange for ours. His lifeblood was the ransom paid to free us from being held hostage to sin, death, and the

devil's power.

"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

His sacrificial death was not just for us, but everyone – the whole world.

"(Jesus) is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2: 2).



**Because of
Jesus, we are:**

Ransomed

Hebrews 9:15

Redeemed

Galatians 3:12-14

Reconciled

2 Corinthians
5:18-21

Do you see what that means? We can trust that God will not be punishing us for our sins because we know that Jesus was already punished for them. It already happened! It is history! A fact! As Apostle Paul says,

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

We do not need to wait until we die to know whether we are going to heaven or hell. Jesus already saved us. How? **He "suffered.... was crucified, died and was buried." When? "Under Pontius Pilate."** It is like saying this: "I was saved around the year 30 when Pontius Pilate was the governor in the land of the Jews and condemned Jesus to die on a cross."

3. Summarize the main tasks of Jesus for coming to live in this world.

JESUS RAISED WITH ABSOLUTE POWER

But Jesus didn't stay in the grave. The Apostles' Creed continues the story:

"He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again from the dead."

Jesus rose from the dead. It certified that we have been restored to peace with God

Why did he descend to hell? It was not to suffer more, but to proclaim he was the conqueror of the devil (1 Peter 3:18-



**Jesus – the
proof that
God loves us**

John 3:16

Romans 5:6-10

1 John 4:9-10

19). Then three days after he died, Jesus rose from the dead proving he really is the Son of God.



Account of Jesus' Resurrection

Luke 24

His resurrection certified that we have been reconciled to God, in other words, restored to peace with God. And it confirmed that those who believe in him will rise from the dead as well. Jesus says,

"For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day" (John 6:40).

That is what we celebrate on Easter Sunday. The Apostles' Creed continues the story:

"He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead."



Jesus ascends to heaven

Luke 24:44-53

Acts 1:4-11

For forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he was seen by many people. Then he ascended into heaven. There, as both God and man, Jesus is "at the right hand" of the Father – an expression that he is at the place of power:

"far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church" (Ephesians 1:21-22).

And on the Last Day, Jesus will return in a way that all people will see him. Everyone who has ever lived will appear before Jesus, their Judge. He will gather

all people together.

He will present the evidence of our faith in him or of the lack of faith in him. Then everyone, even the

devil himself, will bow before Jesus, and admit he is perfectly fair in his judgment.

**Everyone who has ever
lived will appear before
Jesus, their Judge**



When will the end come? God already has the day set but he is not telling us. Jesus said that the Last Day will come *"at an hour you don't expect him"* (Matthew 24: 44). He wants us to live in a way that we are ready at all times. How can we be ready? Many try to be ready by doing good and others by



**Jesus is
glorified**

John 17:5

Hebrews 2:9

Philippians 2:9-10

Revelation 5:11-14



Jesus the Judge

John 5:21-30

Matthew 25:31-46

Acts 17:30-31

2 Corinthians 5:10

performing religious rituals. But nothing we can give would restore us to God's favor. Nothing we do can undo the shame of sin and our damage to God's honor. It could never be enough.

It comes down to the question Jesus asked of his disciples, *"Who do you say that I am?"* (Mark 8:27-29). Why is that so important? Because he is our only hope. He is the only mediator with God and the only way to the Father (1 Timothy 1:4-6; John 14:6). For we believe what the Apostles boldly proclaimed and on which they staked their lives:

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

4. Describe what Jesus does now that he has risen from death.

JESUS IS MY LORD

"I believe in Jesus Christ...our Lord."

If Jesus is our Lord, it means we not only trust him for salvation. It also means we respect his ruling over our lives. Jesus once told his followers, *"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"* (Luke 6:46). Believing in Jesus leads us to desire what is pleasing to him – to live for him. Apostle Paul states,

"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all...that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who



Telling the Story of Jesus (the gospel)

Acts 2:22-36

1 Corinthians

15:1-7

Philippians 2:5-11

Colossians 1:13-20



Living with Jesus as Lord

Matthew 16:24-27

Romans 10:8-11

Romans 14:7-9

died for them and was raised again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Knowing the sacrifice Jesus made to save us and his future return changes how we live our lives.

“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11-14).

All this would be impossible for us and far beyond our ability. That is why Apostle Paul says, *“No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit”* (1 Corinthians 12:3). In the next chapter we will see more on how that happens as we study God, the Holy Spirit.

5. What do you most want to do when you recognize Jesus, your Savior, is also Lord of your life?



CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. Discuss why it is important for the Christian faith to know that Jesus is both God and man?
2. Some people might say that it isn't important or realistic to believe that Jesus came alive again after he died. How would you respond?
3. Determine how it will help you this week to know Jesus is Lord over all things? How can it reduce anxiety and fear?
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



DEVELOP A SUMMARY OF THE LESSON – Write down and discuss a brief explanation of this lesson. Make it clear and simple enough to share with others. If possible, illustrate it with a drawing or diagram.



YOUR NEXT STEPS

Study it!

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

Memorize it!

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

Apply it!

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

Share it!

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

Go on to Chapter Five to understand more about the working of God, the Holy Spirit.

Chapter Five

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

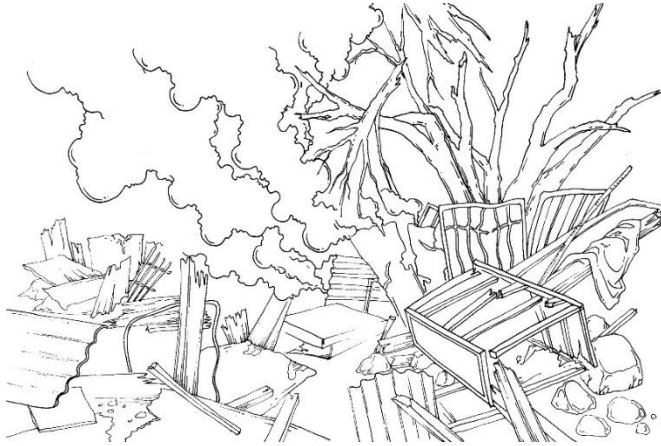
The Apostles' Creed – Part 3

THE THIRD ARTICLE (Sanctification)

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Chapter Five

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT



Sometimes things happen that radically change people's lives or the way they think about things. Maybe it was surviving a tragedy or major surgery. Maybe it was a mission experience among people living in poverty. The whole world looks different now. The priorities change.

1. What events or experiences have made a big difference in your life or in the lives of others you know?

Although the events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection happened around 2,000 years ago, they continue to drastically change lives today all over the world. This is the continual work of the Holy Spirit. In this chapter we will study the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed and what the Holy Spirit does to change our lives around to give new strength and hope.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"I believe in the Holy Spirit. . . "

Who is the Holy Spirit I am to believe in? The Bible reveals that he is one of the persons of the Triune God. He is equal with the Father and the Son. Together with them he also has no beginning or end. Before Jesus returned to heaven, he promised to his disciples that he would send them the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would be God's presence within them after Jesus left. The Holy Spirit would guide them to understand the truth Jesus had taught them and give them boldness to live believing what Jesus had accomplished for them. Jesus called him the Holy Spirit the "Comforter" or "Counselor."

In our world today, you can see how important the work of the Holy Spirit is for us.

"The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:14).



**Jesus promises
to send the Holy
Spirit**

John 14:15-27;

16:5-15

Acts 1:1-9



**Mysteries of God
are only known
through the Holy
Spirit**

1 Corinthians 2

Many people do not believe what the Bible says. They do not believe it when the Bible tells us that God created the world in six days. They do not believe it when it says that God the Son became a human being. They do not believe it when it says Jesus died for the sins of the world. They do not believe it when it says Jesus rose from the dead, or that he will return to the world someday. This is not surprising. The fact is, much of what the Bible says is hard to believe. It is actually impossible for us to understand on our own.

But God the Holy Spirit turns people from unbelievers into believers in Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives you this gift of faith. We would call that

**The Holy Spirit turns
people from unbelievers
to believers in Jesus**

“conversion” which means “turning.” The Spirit opens your eyes to acknowledge how sinful you really are and leads you to trust

that God's Son died to pay for your sins. He makes Jesus look magnificent to your heart. He lives in you to assure you that you are now God's child. And he transforms your thinking and living to be more like Jesus. He changes us - makes us “born again.” The Bible calls this the “new creation” or the “new self.” He works in us not only the desire to fulfill God's good purposes but also gives us the ability to do so (Philippians 2:13, Romans 12:1-2).

The Holy Spirit uses tools to do this. You could compare it to the work of a house builder. A builder uses a saw to cut the wood, a hammer to nail it together, and a brush to put on the paint. The Holy Spirit also uses tools to build us into Christians. The



**The rebirth and
renewal of the
Holy Spirit**

John 3:1-6

Titus 3:3-7

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

2 Thessalonians
2:13-15



**The Fruit of the
Spirit**

Galatians 5:22-23

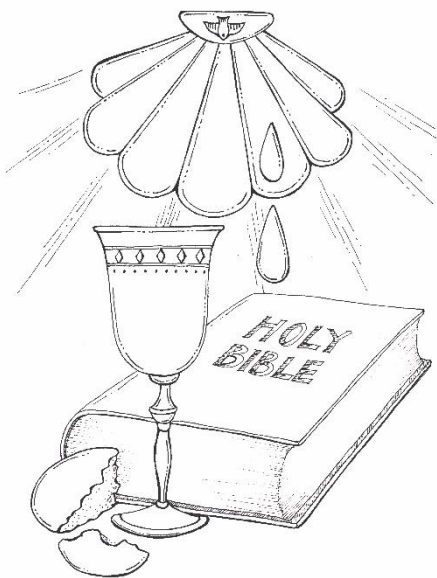
John 15:1-17

tool he uses is the gospel, that is, the good news about our Savior. Apostle Paul said,

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes"
(Romans 1:16).

**The Holy Spirit uses
tools – the gospel – to
build us into Christians**

Whenever you read the Bible, or hear it preached or taught, the Holy Spirit is working on your heart and



mind to lead you to repentance and faith. That is why it is important to make the Bible a part of your daily life. The power of the gospel is also at work in the sacraments established by Jesus. In baptism, water is applied to person in the name of the triune God. In this sacred action, the Holy Spirit connects you to Jesus' death and resurrection and assures you that your sins are washed away. In baptism God has adopted you as his child. In the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, you receive



**The Spirit – living
in you**

John 7:38-39

Romans 8:1-17

Jesus' body and blood with the bread and the wine. It brings you with his promise of forgiveness and unites you with those who believe. It strengthens faith and fills you with new resolve to serve God and extend his love to your neighbors.

2. Review what the Holy Spirit does for our lives

THE GATHERINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Apostles' Creed continues:

"(I believe in) the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins. . ."

When the Holy Spirit brings us to faith, he is bringing us into a community that is larger than ourselves. It includes people throughout the world that believe in Jesus as Savior. In the Apostles' Creed, we also call it the Holy Christian Church or

**The Holy Christian Church
is the global and timeless
community of those who
have faith in Jesus**

the communion of saints. It is the global and timeless community of those who have something eternal in

common. They have been washed in the blood of Jesus and made clean and holy in his sight (Revelation 7:9-14). That is why believers are called "saints."

Where do you find the Holy Christian Church? Actually, that is not very hard. You will find it wherever you find the gospel. When God's Word is



**Our spiritual
ancestors are
those who lived
by faith**
Hebrews 11



**The Holy Spirit
gives birth to the
Christian Church
at Pentecost**
Acts 2

preached and his sacraments are given out, the Holy Spirit is at work. He never fails to lead people to see Jesus as their Savior. As a result, wherever the tools of the Holy Spirit are used, the Holy Christian Church is there.



We must avoid a common mistake. We see many different kinds of churches in the world. Each one is a gathering of people who believe the same things about God. Why are there so many of them? Why do they differ from each other? It is because there are many disagreements about God and his Word. But the Holy Christian Church is not a human organization. You cannot point to any one church on earth and say, "That is the Holy Christian Church." No, the Holy Christian Church is really seen only by God. Only he can see which people truly believe the gospel and which ones do not believe. The Holy Christian Church is all the people that the Holy Spirit has brought to believe and trust in Jesus, the Christ.

No matter what age, ethnic background or present culture, we realize we are all sinners in desperate need of help. We stand together knowing it is only by his grace alone that we can claim a place with him. The good news of Jesus unites us together as



The Christian Church – the body of Christ

Ephesians 2:17-22;

4:1-16

1 Corinthians 1:2;

12:12-31



Forgiveness defined

Psalms 130:3-4

Psalms 103:8-14

Hebrews 8:12

Isaiah 1:18

recipients of the same covering of forgiveness he alone won for us. On this the church either stands or falls.

The Holy Spirit makes believers a "family." We are to

**The forgiveness of sins is
the joyful confidence,
motivation, and message of
the Holy Christian Church**

represent Christ to each other by being devoted to each other in love – unselfishly committed to work together in

the tasks Christ has given us (John 13:34-35; Romans 12:10, Ephesians 4:1-7). And what draws us together?

"(We believe in) **the forgiveness of sins. . .**"

Forgiveness from Jesus is the confidence, motivation, and message of the Holy Christian Church no matter where it is.

3. Describe what is meant by the Holy Christian Church and the communion of saints.

THE FINAL RESULT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Apostle's Creed brings us to the ultimate end:

"(I believe in) the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. "

The holy life Jesus lived covers our shame and sinfulness

Whenever their bodies die, the souls of believers will join Jesus in heaven.

That was the comfort Jesus spoke

to the thief on the cross who came to believe in him at the end of his life (Luke 23:43). The Bible also tells us Jesus will return to earth at the end of time. He will come in the clouds surrounded by angels and command everyone to appear before him, whether they are still alive or had already died. The bodies of all the dead will rise and appear before Jesus – even if they had decomposed or been burned or lost at sea. Then the judge will publicly explain the judgment.

So, will the whole world be going to heaven then? Sadly, the answer is no. The Bible speaks again and again of how some will go to heaven and others to hell. On what basis? Will it be the deeds they performed? The religion they belonged to? No. It will be on the basis of whether or not they had faith in Jesus and put their trust in the forgiveness and life he alone gives. Jesus explains,

“The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them” (John 3:35-36).

On that day, every unbeliever will be separated from God’s goodness forever. Those who depended on their good works or traditions will find them to be far short of what is needed to save them. But believers in Jesus will be welcomed into God’s presence forever.



The End of the World

Mark 13:24-37

Matthew 25:31-46

1 Thessalonians
4:13-18



Comparing this world with heaven

Romans 8:18-21

1 Timothy 4:6-8

1 John 3:1-3

Revelation 7:9-17;
21:1-22:6

He will accept them on the merit of Jesus alone. For them he will supply a new world, a perfect one where they can live forever with him. There will be no trouble there. There will be no sadness, no crime, and no injuries. There will not be death there, either, but rather the fullness of the glory of God.



Just as the Holy Spirit connects us to Jesus for our own salvation, he also outfits us in this world to carry on his mission to let people see our glorious God through our lives among them. We have his mission looking right at us in our homes, in our

We have his mission looking right at us in our homes, our communities and around the world

communities and around the world. They are our spouses, parents, children, employees, employers, neighbors, or even enemies. For no matter how the world may view us, he has given believers in Christ a high and honorable status:



Spreading the story of the Triune God

Psalm 78:4-7

Matthew 28:18-20

Acts 8:4, 13:1-5

Romans 10:14-17

1 John 1:1-3



The Gifts of the Spirit

Romans 12:6-13

1 Corinthians 12

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Our lives are shaped by this grand story of the Triune God. Through hardships and joys he deepens our lives and provides experiences (including suffering) to grow our faith and connect us with others. The events and opportunities of our lives are part of a tapestry of his hand as he weaves our story to be part of his beautiful story. And we know that no matter what happens around us or to us, we are *"more than conquerors."* Nothing in all creation *"can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:37-39).

4. Summarize the main messages of this section.



**Life motivated
by things above**

Colossians 3:1-17

Hebrews 12:1-3

Philippians 3:7-14



CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. Some emphasize visible miracles for your life. What are the miracles the Holy Spirit works in your life today?
2. The Holy Spirit promises to work through tools of the gospel to make you strong in your faith and life. Identify ways you can stay close to that power for your life.

3. How does the return of Jesus at the end of the world shape your life perspectives, priorities, and relationships today?
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



DEVELOP A SUMMARY OF THE LESSON – Write down and discuss a brief explanation of this lesson. Make it clear and simple enough to share with others. If possible, illustrate it with a drawing or diagram.



YOUR NEXT STEPS

Study it!

Read again more carefully the passages in this lesson to understand what God is saying.

Memorize it!

Identify a Bible passage in this lesson that is most meaningful for you and memorize it.

Apply it!

Discuss how you can put this lesson into your life this week.

Share it!

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

APPENDIX

LUTHER'S EXPLANATION of the APOSTLES' CREED

The First Article (*Creation*)

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?

I believe that God created me and all that exists, and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my mind and all my abilities.

And I believe that God still preserves me by richly and daily providing clothing and shoes, food and drink, property and home, spouse and children, land, cattle, and all I own, and all I need to keep my body and life. God also preserves me by defending me against all danger, guarding and protecting me from all evil. All this God does only because he is my good and merciful Father in heaven, and not because I have earned or deserved it. For all this I ought to thank and praise, to serve and obey him.

This is most certainly true.

The Second Article (*Redemption*)

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally.

This is most certainly true.

The Third Article (*Sanctification*)

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him.

But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers.

On the Last Day he will raise me and all the dead and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE NICENE CREED – *was compiled in A.D. 325 at the Council of Nicea. A man named Arius claimed that Jesus was not truly man but just took on the appearance of a human. The Nicene Creed was written to correct his errors and also address other things that were becoming unclear. It was edited in A.D. 381 and is used by Christian Churches around the world today.*

What Christians Believe



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